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THE HONORABLE KARL RHOADS, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Thirtieth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2019
State of Hawai`i

February 22, 2019

RE: S.B. 638, S.D. 1; RELATING TO LIQUOR.

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Wakai, members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, City and County of Honolulu (“Department”), submits the following testimony in support of S.B. 638, S.D. 1.

The purpose of S.B. 638, S.D. 1, is to: increase the penalty for selling liquor without a license; and add unlicensed sale or manufacturing of liquor to the offenses eligible for civil asset forfeiture.

Every day, the Department prosecutes a myriad of criminal offenses that were caused or exacerbated by the consumption of liquor. Given the many dangers associated with liquor consumption, the Department strongly believes that all liquor sales (and manufacturing) should be carefully licensed and monitored. Gone unchecked, unlicensed liquor establishments are a lightning rod for over-consumption, violence and other illegal activity, posing a serious danger to anyone present at these establishments, as well as to the general public.

Raising the offense of unlicensed sale of liquor from a misdemeanor to a C felony would better reflect the seriousness of this offense, and significantly strengthen the manner in which these offenses are addressed by law enforcement and our courts.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, City and County of Honolulu supports the passage of S.B. 638, S.D. 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.